Focused Compliance and Educational Quality Inspection Report
For Schools with Residential Provision

Padworth College

March 2023

Contents

School's Details

College	Padworth College
DfE number	869/6009
Address	Padworth College Padworth Reading Berkshire RG7 4NR
Telephone number	0118 315 0063
Email address	principal@padworth.com
Principal	Mr Crispin Dawson
Directors	Mr Charlie Freer and Mr Mark Jeynes
Proprietor	Padworth College Trust
Age range	13 to 19
Number of pupils on roll	75

	Day pupils	15	Boarders	60
	Seniors	29	**Sixth Form**	46

Inspection dates	7 to 9 March 2023

1.   Background Information

About the school

1.1   Padworth College is a co-educational day and boarding school. It was founded in 1963 as an international college and is situated in the village of Padworth. The school is organised into two sections: the senior school, for pupils in Years 10 and 11, and the sixth form, for pupils in Years 12 and 13. Boarders are accommodated in four single-sex boarding houses on the school site. Governance is provided by the directors of the Padworth College Trust.

1.2   The current principal took up his position in September 2022. The current head of boarding took up his responsibilities in January 2023.

What the school seeks to do

1.3   The college seeks to develop outstanding young people within a community of belonging, with an emphasis on achieving personal excellence.

About the pupils

1.4   Boarders are predominantly international, and come from 17 different countries, with some from families who live locally. Day pupils come mainly from within a local ten-mile radius. The school's own assessment data indicate that pupils' ability is broadly average compared to those taking similar tests nationally. The school has identified four pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities, including dyslexia and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, each of whom receive additional support. No pupil in the school has an education, health and care (EHC) plan. A total of 39 pupils have English as an additional language (EAL), all of whom receive support for their English. Data used by the school have identified seven pupils as being the most able in the school's population, and the curriculum is modified for them.

2. Regulatory Compliance Inspection

Preface

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is approved by the Secretary of State to inspect schools which are, or whose heads are, in membership of the associations which form the Independent Schools Council (ISC) and report on the extent to which they meet the Independent School Standards ('the standards') in the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, including the National Minimum Standards for Boarding ('boarding NMS'), where applicable. Additionally, inspections report on the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996. Inspections also comment on the progress made to meet any compliance action points set out in the school's most recent statutory inspection.

ISI inspections are also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

This is a FOCUSED COMPLIANCE INSPECTION which was combined with an inspection of EDUCATIONAL QUALITY. The FOCUSED COMPLIANCE inspection reports only on the school's compliance with the standards, **including the boarding NMS.** The standards represent minimum requirements and judgements are given either as **met** or as **not met**. All schools are required to meet all the standards applicable to them. Where the minimum requirements are not met, this is clearly indicated in the relevant section of the report and the school is required to take the actions specified. In this focused compliance inspection, key standards have been inspected in detail. These are the standards on safeguarding; measures to guard against bullying; arrangements for pupils' health and safety; arrangements to check the suitability of staff; the provision of information; the handling of parents' complaints; and other related aspects of leadership and management. The remaining standards and requirements are deemed to continue to be met unless evidence to the contrary has been found.

Inspections do not include matters that are outside of the regulatory framework described above, such as: an exhaustive health and safety audit; compliance with data protection requirements; an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features; contractual arrangements with parents; an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures.

Inspectors may be aware of individual safeguarding concerns, allegations and complaints as part of the inspection process. Such matters will not usually be referred to specifically in published reports in this document but will have been considered by the team in reaching its judgements.

Links to the standards and requirements can be found here: The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools.

Key findings

2.1 **The school meets the standards in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools 2022, and associated requirements, and no further action is required as a result of this inspection.**

PART 1 – Quality of education provided

2.2 The school's GCSE and A-level results in the years 2019 to 2022 confirm that teaching enables pupils to make good progress in the context of Part 1 paragraph 3(a).

2.3 The curriculum is documented, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work for the pupils and covers the required breadth of material. The teaching enables pupils to make good progress, encompasses effective behaviour management and is supported by suitable resources. A suitable framework for the assessment of pupils' performance is in place. Boarders have access to a suitable programme of activities.

2.4 Pupils receive relationships and sex education, except in so far as they are lawfully excused. The school has consulted parents and published a written statement of its policy which has regard to the relevant statutory guidance.

2.5 **The standards relating to the quality of education [paragraphs 1–4] are met.**

PART 2 – Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

2.6 Principles and values are actively promoted which facilitate the personal development of pupils as responsible, tolerant, law-abiding citizens. Boarders' views are actively encouraged, and their opinions and concerns are appropriately considered by staff. Boarders are supported to develop good relationships with fellow pupils and staff which are based on mutual trust and respect. Any prefect system operating in the school is suitably managed.

2.7 **The standard relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development [paragraph 5] and NMS 13, 17 and 21 are met.**

PART 3 – Welfare, health and safety of pupils

2.8 Arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils by means that pay due regard to current statutory guidance; good behaviour is promoted; bullying is prevented so far as reasonably practicable; health and safety requirements are met, including those relating to fire safety; provision is made for first aid. Pupils are properly supervised; admission and attendance registers are maintained, as required, and there is a strategic approach to risk assessment. A disability access plan is in place.

2.9 An appropriate induction process for pupils new to boarding is implemented, and suitable provision is made for boarders' medical and health care, their food and drink and for managing boarders' laundry and possessions. Boarders have suitable contact with friends and family. Boarding staff are appropriately trained and deployed.

2.10 **The standards relating to welfare, health and safety [paragraphs 6–16], the requirement of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010, the ban on corporal punishment under section 548 of the Education Act 1996, and NMS 3, 5–12, 15, 16 and 20 are met.**

PART 4 – Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

2.11 The school makes appropriate checks to ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors, and a register is kept as required. Visitors to boarding accommodation are appropriately supervised and the school's arrangements for guardianship are suitably managed.

2.12 The standards relating to the suitability of those in contact with pupils at the school [paragraphs 17–21] and NMS 19 and 22 are met.

PART 5 – Premises of and accommodation at schools

2.13 Suitable toilet and changing facilities, and showering facilities where required by the standard, and appropriate accommodation for pupils' medical and therapy needs are provided. The premises are maintained to a standard commensurate with health and safety; acoustics and lighting are appropriate; water provision is adequate. Suitable outdoor space is provided for physical education and outdoor play. Boarding accommodation is adequate for the needs of all boarders, and safeguards and promotes their welfare.

2.14 The standards relating to the premises and accommodation [paragraphs 22–31] and NMS 4, 7 and 23 are met.

PART 6 – Provision of information

2.15 A range of information is published, provided or made available to parents, inspectors and the Department for Education. This includes details about the proprietor, the ethos of the school and the curriculum, and of the school's arrangements for admission, behaviour and exclusions, bullying, health and safety, first aid, details of the complaints procedure, and the number of complaints registered under the formal procedure during the preceding school year, and the provision for any with education, health and care plans or English as an additional language. It also includes particulars of the school's academic performance during the preceding school year, inspection reports and (for parents only) a report at least annually of their own child's progress. The safeguarding policy is posted on the school's website. A suitable statement of boarding principles and practice is published by the school.

2.16 The standard relating to the provision of information [paragraph 32] and NMS 1 are met.

PART 7 – Manner in which complaints are handled

2.17 Parental complaints, if any, are handled effectively through a three-stage process, (informal, formal and a hearing before a panel of three, one of whom is independent of the school). Each stage has clear time scales, and at the third stage the panel can make findings and recommendations which are communicated to the complainant. Records are kept appropriately, including of any action taken, whether or not a complaint is successful, and identifying those relating to the boarding provision.

2.18 The standard relating to the handling of complaints [paragraph 33] and NMS 14 are met.

PART 8 – Quality of leadership in and management of schools

2.19 The proprietor ensures that the leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge, and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the other standards are consistently met, and they actively promote the wellbeing of the pupils. Appropriate leadership and management of boarding ensure that the required policies and records are maintained and effectively monitored.

2.20 The standard relating to leadership and management of the school [paragraph 34] and NMS 2 are met.

3. Educational Quality Inspection

Preface

The EDUCATIONAL QUALITY inspection reports on the quality of the school's work. It focuses on the two key outcomes:

- The achievement of the pupils, including their academic development, and

- The personal development of the pupils.

The headline judgements apply one of the ISI descriptors 'excellent', 'good', 'sound' or 'unsatisfactory'.

Where necessary, National Curriculum nomenclature is used to refer to year groups in the school.

Key findings

3.1 The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is good.

- Pupils have positive attitudes and are eager to learn, with a willingness to participate actively when given the opportunity to do so.

- Pupils make good progress as a result of the regular assessment system that helps them identify areas to improve in their work, and by readiness in teaching to provide extra individual assistance.

- Pupils are increasingly able to take initiative as they move through the school, but their ability to work independently is sometimes limited by the more prescriptive lessons.

- Pupils achieve well in lessons, but their achievements beyond the classroom are limited.

3.2 The quality of the pupils' personal development is good.

- Pupils' respect for and appreciation of the diversity of their boarding community is excellent.

- Pupils have well-developed social awareness, they collaborate readily, respect differences and show empathy and patience in their relationships with others.

- Pupils display strong decision-making skills, choosing to behave well, choosing to work hard and choosing a path for their future.

- Pupils' self-confidence is good due to the school's caring and nurturing environment. However, some pupils are less confident to communicate and participate during lessons.

Recommendations

3.3 The school is advised to make the following improvements.

- Use assessment and performance tracking data more systematically across all subjects to ensure that pupils make excellent progress.

- Enable pupils to develop greater leadership of their own learning through increased opportunities for independent and collaborative learning in lessons.

- Strengthen pupils' achievements outside the formal curriculum.

- Strengthen pupils' ability to display qualities of leadership in their contributions to others.

- Ensure that all pupils feel equally confident to be communicative and participate during lessons.

The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements

3.4   The quality of the pupils' academic and other achievements is good.

3.5   Pupils' attainment in public examinations is good. Results at A level at grades A* to B increased between 2019 and 2022. With small year group cohorts, the data indicates an improvement in results due to the quality of teaching and pupils' examination preparation. There was a similar increase in GCSE for grades 7 to 9 between 2019 and 2022. GCSE grades 4 to 9 also increased strongly. Pupils' attainment is good and in line with or above national averages. The school began offering NCUK courses for EAL pupils, with their first cohort completing the new qualification in 2021. In 2021 the school's average performance in the 11 assessment areas was in line with or better than the corresponding global averages. Variations between the school's performance and global figures are as a result of the small cohort. Leavers' destinations demonstrate pupils' range of successes in achieving places at a range of universities within the UK. The school is starting to make effective use of baseline and value-added data to track pupils' academic attainment, with some positive impact for pupils understanding how to make best progress. Almost all parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire agreed that teaching helps their child to make progress.

3.6   Pupils display good knowledge, skills and understanding. They are able to apply their skills in different subjects to tackle problems across the curriculum. Mathematical skills are well developed at all ages and there are many examples of their confident application to mathematical problems, but also when needed in other subjects such as science and economics. In many lessons pupils were observed exhibiting their well-developed technological skills. Linguistically pupils' skills are very good, especially as many are international pupils, as observed in an A-level economics lesson where pupils were at ease discussing bank rates and monetary policy committee forecasts. They speak with clarity and use mature vocabulary. They express themselves confidently and with feeling. For many, English is their second language. These pupils exhibit advanced speaking skills, as seen when Year 11 pupils use detailed language to discuss weather events. Pupils' writing skills are showcased by their work in English where Year 11 pupils analyse their set texts and write at length on topics such as gender equality, 'Being young and dyslexic', and in economics 'The desirability of perfect competition'.

3.7   Pupils' communication skills are good, and they gain confidence to move between their native languages and English. Pupils develop effective and fluent communication skills as a result of the school's commitment to providing significant opportunities for discussion within the curriculum, such as the use of wave equations in a Year 10 physics lesson. Ideas are shared, discussed and refined. Year 12 pupils were thoughtful in considering different perspectives of the Soviet contribution to the Korean war. Teachers take care to cater for those students whose mastery of English is not yet complete by explaining key vocabulary and regularly checking that all their students have understood what has been said or written. Some further mathematics pupils successfully discussed how to sketch rational functions with two vertical asymptotes. When presented with opportunities in for instance English, history, EAL and geography lessons, pupils show they can write extended pieces that are well structured and well reasoned, as observed in some written project work.

3.8   Pupils have well-developed numeracy skills that they can apply them with confidence to other areas of learning, for instance in science and economics lessons. Subject departments co-ordinate their teaching so that numerical and mathematical concepts needed in other areas are first covered in maths lessons where possible. Pupils' mathematical skills and knowledge are strong. For example, pupils in Year 10 studying science are able to calculate the value of unknown variables from the data they are given, and in a Year 12 mathematics lesson pupils successfully apply trigonometry to advanced equations. They gain a thorough grounding of the basic knowledge from which to extend their learning. In biology they use their numerical skills working on population biodiversity and in sociology with the determination of population growth rates.

3.9   Pupils are confident users of information and communication technology (ICT). Their laptops are frequently used in lessons for research on the internet, for writing notes, and for presenting work and

accessing resources. Pupils appreciate the ability to access lesson resources outside the classroom and outside school hours when their teachers make these available. In some lessons, pupils sometimes take the opportunity to use graph plotters, such as in mathematics to test their understanding of rational functions. Pupils constructed short programmes to control electronic circuits, and in art used the appropriate app on their devices to produce very high-quality images. Pupils are adept in the use of electronic resources. Teaching has increased the amount that pupils use ICT, with the result that pupils' ICT skills have improved, and they are able to complete a good range and volume of work.

3.10   Pupils develop effective study skills. They are confident in assimilating and analysing information from a range of sources, understanding how to determine their reliability. Pupils are able to apply their learning from previous work to new situations. In Science Senior pupils carry out laboratory reports that require them to investigate a given topic, such as when examining the rate of respiration in yeast cells. Pupils can form a hypothesis, devise an experiment to test it, risk assess it, carry it out, analyse the results, draw conclusions and then evaluate their work. When encouraged to work independently in lessons, teaching successfully aids pupils' capacity for setting the pace for their own learning and associated research, for instance in work for the Extended Project Qualification. All parents who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the school equips their child with the team working, collaborative and research skills they need in later life.

3.11   The school offers some opportunities for the students to participate in, and achieve in, scholarships and competitions outside the curriculum. When they have a keen interest, they achieve academic distinctions, such as language A levels outside the taught curriculum and science Olympiads. They also experience success in team and individual sports, representing the school at football and basketball, and participation in swimming and athletics events. Where students have done so reflects on their desire to achieve more widely, and to the school's ability to encourage them.

3.12   Pupils of all ages demonstrate attitudes to learning which are very good. They show genuine interest and curiosity in their academic studies, as observed when Year 12 pupils created a window display for a fashion brand in a graphic design lesson and when conducting research into the southeast Asian treaty organisation in a history lesson. Pupils are focused learners throughout their lesson, and they are equally productive in their independent endeavours and in collaborative work when provided with opportunities to work as groups of learners. As a result, the time for learning is used efficiently, both in lessons and in independent study sessions. They listen carefully and respectfully to their peers and their teachers. Leadership promotes positive attitudes to lifelong learning, helping pupils to become confident and self-motivated learners.

The quality of the pupils' personal development

3.13   The quality of the pupils' personal development is good.

3.14   Pupils display good levels of self-confidence and self-esteem in and out of the classroom. Pupils spoke about the role that boarding life plays in helping them grow in self-understanding, discipline and confidence, with pupils commenting that they are in a kind community. Pupils were able to reflect constructively on their learning intentions for the day in tutor time. They have gained a good understanding of how to improve their own learning and performance and understand why they should deliver their best effort. Year 12 pupils demonstrated good resilience in refining their essay plans, embracing challenges to go further with ideas and link concepts and terminology. Year 13 pupils spoke articulately about their forward planning of work, and the benefits of having an individually tailored study plan. Pupils' ability to communicate effectively out of class in their social interactions demonstrates their confidence and resilience. Boarding makes a significant contribution to pupils' self-understanding, enabling them to become more confident, independent, and preparing pupils for the future. All parents who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the school helps their child to be confident and independent. The small size of the school enables pupils to work together with others of different nationalities, backgrounds and beliefs with confidence.

3.15 Pupils show a strong understanding of the role their decisions play regarding their choices for the future. Pupils applying for university were able to articulate their aims in line with the academic requirements for different courses. Many pupils expressed their understanding of the importance of making good decisions to be successful. Boarders said that boarding builds routines and discipline which helps them make good choices. In their Christian Union activity, pupils were able to articulate how ensuring that their faith informed their choice of career would contribute to their own wellbeing. They also talked enthusiastically of the way the school had supported their decision-making with staff giving generously of their time to discuss future choices around careers and wellbeing. Pupils in a tutor period were able to reflect on their progress and showed a good understanding of how their learning approaches would influence outcomes towards making their higher education choices. Members of the Christian Union discussed their future career aspirations with the common goal of ensuring their strong faith forms part of their choices. Pupils make positive decisions in respect of their learning, practising punctuality and approaching lessons positively.

3.16 Pupils show a good awareness of the importance of the spiritual dimension of their lives. In a sociology lesson, Year 12 pupils developed their spiritual understanding through an exploration of crime prevention in society, considering sensibly different approaches that might be taken to prevent and control crime. The discussion included sensitive philosophical perspectives on societal approaches to crime and criminals. In interviews, pupils showed a keen appreciation for the school's priority of valuing and tolerating all faiths. Pupils share cultural and religious viewpoints readily and respectfully. In some lessons pupils demonstrated an appreciation for the non-material aspects of life and appreciation of the aesthetic. For example, Year 11 art students show a developed awareness of beauty and nature in their work. Pupils place value on their friendships, and their experience of being part of a small international school community. In discussion, pupils talked of the journey they had been on in recognising life beyond academic work. They expressed thoughts beyond academic grades, having been encouraged to experience and build connections beyond the classroom.

3.17 Pupils show a clear sense of right and wrong. Senior boarding pupils speak enthusiastically of the respectful, caring, and empathetic nature of the school community. Behaviour of pupils showed a clear respect for the rules of the school, and pupils were able to articulate the importance of organised routines, and self-discipline. They have a strong sense of doing the right thing and frequently expressed the importance of openness and respect, as well as the impact of their behaviour on others. Year 12 sociology pupils showed a good understanding of sophisticated moral arguments around criminalising vulnerable people in society.

3.18 Pupils demonstrate excellent social awareness and their approach to working together to achieve common goals is a strength. There is a clear sense of collective responsibility and their boarding experience contributes significantly to this. There are excellent pupil teacher relationships predicated on mutual respect and kindness. Pupils identified community as a key part of school life and praised the role induction plays to feeling a sense of belonging. The collaborative culture is so defined that pupils are eager to play their part in welcoming new arrivals to the school. Relationships between pupils are positive, and their collaborative skills also come to the fore in their activities, as seen in lessons such as Year 11 French where there is group learning, and in Year 10 ICT where pupils cooperate and show patience in working towards their goal. House competitions such as football, pancake races and 'bake off' further cement collaborative skills. Almost all parents who responded to the questionnaire said that the school helps their child to develop strong teamwork and social skills. Inspection evidence supports this view.

3.19 Pupils' display a good quality of leadership in their contributions to others when given the opportunity. Pupils spoke of the student council as a useful vehicle for pupil voice and said that they have a say in bringing about positive change and opening up dialogue enabling them to shape their school experience, such as influencing the rules around mobile phone use. Pupils choose charities they would like to raise money for and have contributed to Cash for Kids, Mission Christmas, MacMillan Cancer Support and supported an orphanage in Uganda. Pupils enthusiastically discussed current ideas for

charity fundraising and say that they feel supported by their teachers in pursuing these. Pupils engage with the wider community and say that they are particularly proud of an initiative which saw them travel to a local school to teach Year 7 pupils about their own cultures and languages. However, opportunities for pupils to display leadership in their contributions to others remain somewhat limited, with the result that pupils' leadership skills are not developed as strongly as possible.

3.20 Pupils express appreciation of the school's diverse, international community. They are consistently respectful of each other and their diverse backgrounds, experiences and identities. The international nature of the school community was championed by pupils in questionnaire findings as a strength of the school's ethos. The sense of community is promoted by governance, leadership and management, and as a result pupils are pleased to be part of a welcoming and multi-cultural institution. When pupils make presentations to the school community, for example in assemblies, they talk with enthusiasm about how they feel valued. Pupils enjoy international meal days, which are promoted by leadership and management, and as a result gain appreciation for life outside school. A discussion in French by pupils of Ukrainian and Egyptian nationalities demonstrated consideration of ethical issues of food poverty in other countries. Boarders readily share their knowledge and experiences of different countries, which contributes to pupils gaining cultural understanding beyond their own. Almost all parents who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the school actively promotes values of democracy, respect and tolerance of other people. Inspection evidence supports this view.

3.21 Across the school pupils show understanding of how to stay safe and the importance of a healthy lifestyle. In discussion, pupils articulated the need to pursue a balanced and healthy lifestyle. Their enjoyment of the broader life of the school cements their understanding of the need to stay physically healthy. Equally pupils were able to talk about their mental health and how to seek support when necessary, readily discussing examples of when staff would assist them, and valuing their participation in clubs and activities to help them stay healthy. In particular, they feel supported by the teachers who give generously of their time and attention. Pupils are taught strategies to stay safe through a comprehensive personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) programme. Almost all pupils who responded to the questionnaire said that they understood how to stay safe when online. Pupils confidently explained the importance of good nutrition and were appreciative of the opportunities to undertake exercise in the gym and through clubs like basketball, badminton and volleyball. Many pupils also spoke of the care they receive from their peers who are conscious of the mental and physical health of their friends and help ensure that they seek the right guidance.

4.   Inspection Evidence

4.1   The inspectors observed lessons, had discussions with pupils and examined samples of pupils' work. They held discussions with members of staff and with the directors of the proprietary body, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended form meetings. Inspectors visited the boarding house and the learning support and educational resource areas. Inspectors considered the responses of parents, staff and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires. The inspectors examined curriculum and other documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Miss Katherine Haynes	Reporting inspector
Mrs Alison Shakespeare	Compliance team inspector (Bursar, HMC school)
Mr Bill Chadwick	Team inspector (Former deputy head, HMC school)
Mr Luke Michael	Team inspector for boarding (Deputy head, HMC school)